

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Katsugo Miho

Katsugo Miho was born May 15, 1922 in Kahului, Maui. He was educated at Maui High School and attended the University of Hawai'i in 1941.

World War II interrupted his schooling and he joined the Hawai'i Territorial Guard, and subsequently the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. In 1946, he took up his studies again at the university, and continued his education at George Washington University Law School, where he received his degree.

When he returned to Hawai'i, he joined Fong, Miho, Choy & Robinson law firm, where his brother, Katsuro Miho, was practicing.

He was elected to the state house of representatives as a Republican in 1959, and served until 1970. Following his time in the legislature, Miho served as a family court judge and left the bench in 1979.

Tape Nos. 17-36-1-89 and 17-37-1-89

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Katsugo Miho (KM)

November 16, 1989

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK) and Warren Nishimoto (WN)

Joy Chong: The following is an interview with Katsugo Miho. It took place on November 16, 1989 at the Miho residence. The interviewers were Michi Kodama-Nishimoto and Warren Nishimoto. This is videotape number one.

MK: Okay. I guess we can start with your parents' background. Tell us where your parents came from, and why they came to Hawai'i.

KM: My parents [Katsuichi and Ayano Miho] came from Hiroshima[-*ken*], like a lot of Japanese immigrants. And my dad was a Japanese[-language] school teacher and principal. Because of the (large number) of immigrants (from Hiroshima), there was a call out for Japanese[-language] school teachers (from Hiroshima). (My dad) was one of the early ones to volunteer to come to Hawai'i. And as I understand it, his parents would not give him permission to come to Hawai'i unless he left behind a son and a daughter in Japan (to continue the Miho family in Japan). He had three children at that time. He left the eldest son [Katsuto] and the eldest daughter [Hisae], and came to Hawai'i with the third daughter [Rosaline Tsukie]. And then after coming to Hawai'i, he raised five more children (Katsuro, Fumiye, Katsuso, Katsuaki and Katsugo). And I'm the youngest of eight children, five boys, and I'm number five, so I'm Katsugo [*go* in Japanese means "five"].

MK: And about when did your parents come to Hawai'i?

KM: As I understand it, I know my brothers would know more about it, but, sometime (in) 1910 is when they supposed to have come.

MK: And when they came to Hawai'i, where did they settle?

KM: Oh, as I understand it, there was a period of time when he [KM's father] went to California, also. He tried out working for the railroad, at that time, or something about raising bees and honey. But he didn't like it, and he came back. He left his wife and children here, and then went and came back again, as I understand it. And then he went back to teaching, and he settled in Honolulu, what is now the area of Pālāma. And then stayed there for a while, and

then moved over to Maui where he spent most of his life, in Maui.

MK: And that would be Kahului?

KM: Well, (before) Kahului, different villages and different camps. Most of the time, however, was in Kahului where he raised his family. At that point, he had gotten out of teaching, and was, I think, (the manager) for one of the (Japanese) stores that was, Onishi. Onishi Store [Onishi Shōkai].

WN: Do you know what your father was doing in Hiroshima, prior to coming?

KM: He was the principal of a Japanese school in the village from where they came. As a matter of fact, he was (a) middle school (principal). Middle school (has) different meaning in Japan. Elementary school. He was the first principal of (a) school (which) my grandfather is supposed to have (founded). And years ago (1965, on my first trip) to Japan (after the war), he took me to that school, and sure enough, there's a row of pictures of past principals, and his picture was number one on the wall. (School is located in Kusuna, Hiroshima.)

MK: And your mother, was she also a teacher?

KM: I understand she taught Japanese school when she came to Hawai'i, you know. In those days, you didn't have to be bilingual. The Japanese[-language] school teachers were strictly Japanese-speaking teachers.

MK: And . . .

KM: So, when she had time, I understand, when she had time from raising a family of, well, actually five, over here, six, that she did some teaching.

MK: And I know that your father was a schoolteacher, and later he became a (businessman) and hotel owner?

KM: He was working for Onishi, as Onishi Store's (manager) as I understand it. And then later, they started a small hotel in Kahului where I grew up.

MK: And what was the name of that hotel?

KM: Used to be known as Kahului Hotel, and then they changed it over to Miho Hotel. Where, it's now a parking lot in Kahului Shopping Center, the original shopping center. The hotel was torn down. The original town of Kahului had been torn down. And now, the site (is a parking lot on) the first increment of the Kahului Shopping Center.

WN: Oh, so the hotel was on the opposite side of Onishi?

KM: That's right.

WN: Across the street.

KM: Just across, immediately across from Onishi Store (and railroad tracks). (Railroad ran through the middle of the town.)

WN: So your dad taught Japanese school in Honolulu?

KM: Maui also, (mostly on Maui). (Per Katsuro, our family lived in Honolulu for only a year. Before I was born.)

WN: And Maui also?

KM: Yeah. He also taught in Maui until he got out of teaching and started to work for Onishi.

WN: Okay.

MK: And you know, since your father was a schoolteacher, and he was a businessman, how active was he in community affairs or political affairs of that time?

KM: Oh, he was very active. He continued his (membership) in the Japanese[-language] school teachers' association. And then, he did some reporting work for a Japanese-language paper. And he was very active in the Japanese school board as well as. . . . One of the reasons why he was one of the first ones to be picked up on December 7, 1941 [the day Pearl Harbor was bombed], was because he was a volunteer worker for the Japanese consul general. The Japanese consul general in Hawai'i had volunteer workers in the various islands who did registration work and did various functions as an unpaid volunteer for the Japanese consul general.

MK: Okay. And, you know, since your father was involved in community affairs, what kind of attitudes or thoughts did he communicate to the children about being involved in community affairs?

KM: Well, my being the youngest in the family, I don't recall (too many discussions of that nature with my dad). Because by that time, he was very much involved in running the hotel (while) I was growing (up). But, as I grew older, it was my function to take him to (and) pick him up from all these various functions (and meetings). He wasn't that good a driver. So, (at fifteen years old) when I got my license, my chore was to, basically, take him to certain functions, and to go and get him from all these various functions. So, I was aware of his more than ordinary activities within the community. But I thought (his involvement was normal as a former) Japanese[-language] school teacher. (Yes,) he was quite active in civic affairs, yeah.

WN: Did you work at all in the hotel?

KM: Oh, yes. As a (matter of fact as) you grew up, you know, you do all, various functions, including making the beds and things like that, as I grew up, yeah. Because my brothers and sisters went away to school, meaning they had to come to Honolulu for a college education and whatnot. So there was quite a gap between myself and (my) brother (Katsuaki) above me was three years, and one (Katsuso) above him was another three years. So, right off the bat, you know, my brother Paul and I, there were six years' difference.



WN: And who stayed at the hotel?

KM: I was the one that stayed (home) the longest, you know.

WN: But in terms of clientele.

KM: Oh. Our type of hotel was a (family-style hotel). The regular clientele was made up of—the Honolulu wholesales stores sent salesmen out to the neighbor islands to take orders. And the great majority of them stayed at our place. So the first two weeks (of the month) or so was a very busy period because that's when they all came. You know, last week and a half was rather easy because there was hardly anybody staying at the hotel. However, every once in a while, (like) October, (when we) had the Maui County Fair, we had a horrible time because we had a lot of the show people, E.K. Fernandez's show people, staying. So we had problems in (accommodating)—how to take care of our regular guests, as well as the show people that E.K. brought in.

WN: So how has hotel keeping changed? How is it different, then as compared to now?

KM: Well, the only hotel I know is the kind that (our) family (had on Maui). Everybody in the family helped out and we did all the work. And I think we had one or two helpers, full-time maids or full-time helpers who lived with us at the hotel. One used to commute all the time. One or two, and one lady helping in the kitchen because we fed the guests Japanese-type food. My mother was working from early in the morning until late in the evenings.

MK: In terms of your economic standing in the community, you know, your father being a businessman, but having a large family, how would you, I guess, rate, your family compared to other Japanese people on Maui, at that time?

KM: Well, I think all of the Japanese community had a rough going. The years were pretty rough, except for the few who—by reputation, there were just a few family who were really well-to-do. The rest of us were all struggling, making ends meet. Those who, within the community were considered well-to-do, were just the minimum number of people, minimum number of families.

MK: Now, kind of shifting the emphasis, tell us about yourself. When were you born?

KM: I was born on May 15, 1922.

MK: Okay. And in terms of your schooling, where did you go?

KM: I started off at Kahului Grammar School, which was located right in Kahului, walking distance. And then high school, I went to Maui High School, which was located then at Hāmākua Poko, which is about eleven or twelve miles from Kahului. And we had to commute by bus. There were one or two buses every morning that we could catch. Maybe three buses, the early, middle and late bus. We commuted every day. There was a bus system on Maui, at that time, so it wasn't that bad. However, as we got involved in athletic events and things like that, the difficulty was from Hāmākua Poko to Pā'ia, a short distance (at) about two miles.

There was no bus system (after school between Hāmākua Poko and Pā‘ia). So after practice, or after (a school event) you know, we had to walk down from Hāmākua Poko to Pā‘ia, (but) from Pā‘ia, there would be a bus coming back to Kahului.

- WN: So Maui High School, being in Hāmākua Poko—so it’s like the center of the population was more the plantation, and Kahului was more like a (bus stop).
- KM: Kahului and Wailuku were the center of Maui. However, Wailuku did not have a high school. And when ‘Īao, it was then known as ‘Īao Intermediate, or whatever, became a high school, Baldwin High School, it had to (expand) from, incrementally increase from eighth grade to ninth grade to tenth grade to eleventh grade. And our year is when they started (the expansion). They couldn’t take all of us into Baldwin High School, (but we were) uninformed (about this and we went) to Maui High School and we had to pay for the bus. But I didn’t, I don’t think our parents knew that there was any, you know, (free) public transportation system that should have been available or what, (and) we had to buy monthly tickets to go to Hāmākua Poko, and those who were lucky, walked over to Baldwin High School because it was about a mile and a half from Kahului to Baldwin High School. (Baldwin expanded) incrementally, every year from ninth grade, tenth grade, eleventh grade. And (it started) from my year. And many of us went to Maui High School because, number one, it was **the** thing to do then, to go to Maui High School. Baldwin was (new) something unknown, you know, and so, basically for Wailuku, Wailuku kids. However, there were a few of my classmates (from Kahului) who went to Baldwin, but the great majority, 90 percent of them went to Maui High School.
- MK: You know, you mentioned that you were active in sports. What kind of sports were you active in back then?
- KM: Oh, I was active in anything that you could run and play. Because that was—when we used to go to Japanese school, all of us, (it was) mandatory to go to Japanese school after (English) regular school (until eighth grade). To get away from going to Japanese school, the boys always got involved in (sports). So when basketball season came around, “*Sensei*, you know today, we have basketball practice, so we have to go.” Get out of class and go to basketball practice. And (when) baseball season (came) around, and we’d be getting involved in baseball. You have to go to baseball practice and, (so on). Football, we did the same in football. And football, Maui had a very good recreational system. Alexander & Baldwin sponsored a recreational system where we had an Alexander House-sponsored recreational activities, where all the children got involved in baseball, football, (and basketball). (We had) intercommunity [competitions]—Kahului played Wailuku, Kahului played Hāmākua Poko, Kahului played Ha‘ikū, Lahaina and Pā‘ia. And we were very intensively involved in these recreational activities. So all of us, we participated in whatever sport that we could get involved in, seasonally. We weren’t good at it, but we certainly (were kept busy) and I think it was a good way of keeping the kids involved because, although the great majority did go to language schools, the great majority of us continued (to participate). But there was a gap after or before high school. (Most of the kids) stopped going (to Japanese school after eighth grade). Up until the eighth grade, you had a great many of them going. After eighth grade, very few continued on to Japanese schools.

MK: You know, recently, I talked with Toshio Ansai. And Senator Ansai was telling me in the early years of his career, he was very active in Maui sports. Were you, at any time, familiar with Senator Ansai back then when you were in sports?

KM: Oh, yes. I knew about Toshi Ansai because he was already a politician before the war. And he was from Wailuku, not from Kahului, so I didn't know him personally. But being one of the early politicians of Japanese ancestry, I think he was known by all of us. And when he became actively involved, I think they weren't really a Democratic party, yet, in Maui, you know. When I became aware of politics in Maui, there was (only) one (known) Democrat. But he was more known to be a rabble-rouser type of a politician, and therefore, he didn't leave that good an impression on everybody. And those days, I remember, that if (the) Democratic party wanted any kind of a rally in Kahului, they had difficulty in finding a location to hold a rally because the whole town was, I think, owned and operated by the Kahului Railroad. And Kahului Railroad, I think, was connected with one of the Big Five, anyway, I forget which one. (Only place available was at the U.S. post office building.)

WN: Must be A&B [Alexander & Baldwin], huh?

KM: That's right, A&B. And so they could only hold a rally (on) federal property or public property.

MK: Let's stop here, we're changing the tape now.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is a continuation of the Katsugo Miho interview. This is videotape number two.

MK: Tape two, interview with Katsugo Miho. Okay, Kats, you were telling us about Kahului Railroad having power in Maui, especially in Kahului. Can you continue with that and tell us, you know, who were the people who had power in Maui at that time period?

KM: Well, as I recall, the manager of Kahului Railroad Company was a Mr. William Walsh. And very early in life, I found out that he was almost like God to the community, you know. He had almost absolute control those days even for us, who had our own businesses, I think all of the merchants, all what they had was a month-to-month lease for the premises. They may have owned the building, but the land was (not individually owned). It was (leased) on a month-to-month lease. And of course, I didn't understand any of this until I actually came back from the wars [World War II] and found out a little bit about the background of how my mother sold the hotel, and how lucky it was that she was able to get rid of the termite-eaten building because (all what we had was a month-to-month lease) to the land. But she was able to get rid of the hotel to someone who was willing to run the hotel. And this was during wartime, yeah.

And Mr. Walsh was—I remember a lot of the families, most of the merchants, Japanese-style, every New Year, would deliver gifts to the Walsh family. And, (in later years, I) did it regularly (for our family), especially just before New Year's, and deliver these gifts over to the (Walsh home). It would be either edible—substantial for those of us who were giving it, it

was a substantial kind of gift, and this is strictly Japanese-style, where every year, (you remember those you are obligated to, e.g.,) your landlord, your Japanese[-language] school teachers, and this, in Japanese culture, stems from what we speak of as *giri*. (We) talk about *giri-ninjō*. (It) is an integral part of the Japanese culture which, unfortunately, even in Japan, is beginning to become very diluted. From what I know of Japanese culture—I think it's the mainstay of the Japanese culture, (to remember) those you have to (acknowledge) and (to fulfill your) obligation. And this goes down, all the way down.

MK: So that presentation of that yearly gift was like a recognition of Walsh's . . .

KM: Position.

MK: . . . superior position?

KM: As the patron of the people who lived and worked in Kahului. Even though we didn't work for him, the merchants were independent, basically. We didn't work for him. As tenants and lessees, we owed everything to the Kahului Railroad and he (was the big boss).

WN: What about the Baldwin family? Was there contact with them?

KM: Kahului, no, because Kahului was strictly harbor activities. No sugar involved, other than the fact that we knew who they were. Community-wise, the Baldwin family was **the** family in (Maui). Everything evolved about what the Baldwins did. But, you know, there were two different worlds. We grew up in two different worlds, a White (and non-White) community. Basically, a White community (was) made up of white-collar workers, so to speak because—I grew up in the surroundings where you (never) saw a Caucasian person waiting on tables, or (in) the so-called service industry. And I think the first time I ever saw a Caucasian waitress was when I came out to Honolulu in 1939 to play (high school) football. And that was the first time I ever saw a Caucasian waitress, and (it) opened my eyes. And when I went back to Kahului, it was a strange feeling.

(Laughter)

KM: Non-Caucasians lived in a world of their own. The Japanese community was, basically, Japanese. We went to [English] grammar school, and grammar school was over by one o'clock or one-thirty. And immediately thereafter, we went to Japanese school whether school started one-thirty or school started at three o'clock, you all went down to Japanese school because you had so many different activities going on in the Japanese school. Whereas in (English) school, once the school (was) over, there (was) hardly any activity going on.

And so everything moved over to the Japanese school. And all of our friends were there. And other than the classroom—classroom was a chore. Learning Japanese was a real chore, especially for the boys. I think the girls got more out of Japanese school than the boys. It was a very good baby-sitting system. Parents all knew where the kids were, because (in) the Japanese school system, the teachers had closer ties to the families than the English school. English schoolteachers, as I remember, after school, we had very little contact.

And growing up in that kind of an environment, the basic Japanese culture continued to exist for us because there was a Shinto temple in the background. There was a Buddhist church right next to the Japanese school. And the Shinto church and the Buddhist church had all kinds of activities which involved members of the (Japanese community). And one thing that (I) might (point out) is my name, Katsugo. No other name. My generation, as you can—I would say 90 percent would have only one name. And it was after our generation that the schoolteachers, primarily, started to encourage and kind of coerce the families to have the children pick up English names. Now, I recall that the persuasion was not on a basis that it was English names, but that it was referred to as Christian names. The great majority of the kids were going to Buddhist church, if they went. Because the Buddhist church was the main center of social activities in our community. Some of the merchants' families became involved in the Kahului Union Church which was (a) Protestant church, which became more involved with the community as the kids grew older. And a few converts from Buddhism turned over to the Protestant leanings. And the generations after us, you had a lot of them adding on an English name. At that time, it was known as Christian names. And that may have been a deterrent for the parents who were basically Buddhist. Why should they have a Christian name? But, I think historically, the second generation are all one-named. No English names.

MK: You know, back then, they said that in the Japanese-language schools, they would also have morals teachings.

KM: *Shūshin*?

MK: *Shūshin*. What did you get out of that?

KM: *Shūshin*, to me, is something which is missing in the American educational system. Even the Japanese cut out *shūshin*, and I think by the [American] military edict that *shūshin* was pointedly barred from the curriculum of the Japanese schools [during the occupation of Japan at the end of World War II]. Unfortunately, I don't recall that (far) back, but according to what I understand, [*shūshin* was] primarily based on emperor worship. Part of it, I'm pretty sure, weighed heavily on emperor worship, but to me, it was more teachings on filial piety, as I remember *shūshin*. Emphasis on your reverence for your ancestor, for your parents, for your teachers. All these *giri-ninjō* background, I can recall, was out of *shūshin*. You had basically *shūshin*, and I think it was the major course in Japanese school. You had handwriting. You had reading. Sometimes they had calligraphy, but that didn't last too long. What else? And again, basically, the main emphasis was on *shūshin*.

MK: In *shūshin*, did you learn anything in terms of your relationship to country?

KM: You see, I have distinct recollections of stories about Nogi *Taishō* [Maresuke Nogi], stories about Togo *Taishō* [Heihachiro Togo]. Nogi is Nogi *Taishō*. Togo is not referred to *taishō*. He's an admiral. I forgot what the admiral reference was (Togo *Gensui*). But those two [Russo-Japanese War heroes] were very much idolized, and very much in the *shūshin* teachings of what they did as they were growing up, what they did for their country. And all these, gee, it's been so many years ago, but, at various levels of growing up, there were different types of stories. But if I remember, [these stories were] basically around, I think, similar characters, you know. What Togo did as a young boy, or as, a more easily understood



story was told [when] you were in the lower grades, and as you grew up, (there) were more involved stories with more meaning and background into it, involving these different people. And throughout Japanese educational background, you have many, many stories of people who struggled through life to succeed in whatever they were doing. And these were examples that were taught in *shūshin*. Oh gee, people who had to struggle through life, and succeed, easily related to the students because we're all struggling. As soon as we could, most of us started to work part-time, you know. Our whole life was working part-time.

MK: What kind of part-time work did you do?

KM: The earliest work that I did was as a newspaper delivery boy, delivering (a) biweekly Japanese-language newspaper. And I had to walk all over the town of Kahului to make deliveries because not everybody took the newspaper, but I had to cover the whole town in order to make the deliveries. And the deliveries were done prior to going to Japanese school when I could, and then sometimes when I don't finish it up, after Japanese school. But I did it for about six or seven years as—very young. I don't recall when I started.

But after that, I worked as a—cane field—they used fourteen-, fifteen-year-olds working in the cane fields, just around the time plantation had difficulties with, was beginning to have difficulties with unionism all in those early years. And so I worked three years, I think, in the cane fields as a teenager, getting up—and this is during the summer months, three months in the summer—getting up about two-thirty in the morning because we had to catch a truck. Kahului, you know, Kahului kids had to be trucked out to the working area, and we were picked up, either at three-thirty or four o'clock, I think it was. And then work will get through early, we get through work by two-thirty in the afternoon. And three years of working in the cane fields, all different types of jobs. In fact, one year when the Filipino community, the Filipino workers had a big strike, we did cutting cane immediately after the canes were burned. And because of the danger of any violence, we were guarded by armed guards out in the cane fields because of the danger of the possible violence against us who didn't know any better. We were strike breakers. (Chuckles) For us, it was a means of making a livelihood to help the family because every little bit helped, at that time.

Then I, I worked in—I also worked as a movie theater usher in the evenings for about three years also, and then, the last year of my high school, I worked in the cannery. And I, after graduating from high school, I stayed back one whole year working as a maintenance man at the cannery. All the family members did not immediately go to college. We worked one year after high school in order to make some expenses for tuition and whatnot. And so I got out in '40, but I started University of Hawai'i [UH] in 1941. And worked at the cannery, full-time, as a maintenance man.

MK: So in '41, you had already entered the UH, and war came.

KM: That's right.

MK: Okay, I think when we change tape, we'll continue with that, then.

END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

JC: The following is a continuation of the Katsugo Miho interview. This is videotape number three.

MK: Okay, videotape number three with Katsugo Miho. Okay. We were just beginning to get into World War II, now. How did World War II affect your family and yourself?

KM: Well, as I said, I started University of Hawai'i, 1941. And December 7th happened. I was staying at Atherton House dorm, Charles Atherton House. I remember that morning, we had to get up a little early (that) Sunday morning, because some of us had planned to go to Church of the Crossroads. There's something interesting going on there anyway. Normally, we don't (get up that early) on Sunday mornings, but that morning, we had to get up a little early because we were going to church. And we were up in the shower room shaving, and whatnot, and then we heard a lot of commotion downstairs. And the commotion was about—we had some, what we call, army brats who were living at the dorm, would commute from Schofield. The parents were out in Schofield, but they lived at the dorm so that they don't have [to commute], but weekends they go back. And it so happened that couple of the boys came running in, and yelling all over downstairs, says, "Hey, we're being attacked, being attacked!" What's going on, you know?

Then we became conscious of the fact that we could hear rumbling (sounds) out in the distance. And so we got up on the roof of A House [Atherton House] and looked out (towards) Pearl Harbor and we could see black smoke, and you could hear the roar of the airplanes. And sure enough, the radio—put the radio on, and the radio was talking about being invaded, being attacked, and that the planes had little red dots. And obviously, it was Japanese planes and whatnot. And shortly thereafter, while we were in a state of confusion, the radio started to ask for ROTC [Reserved Officers' Training Corps] boys to volunteer their services and report to the gym. Where the (the administration building is now located was site of the old gym). And (most) of us who were at A House walked over, and by ten-thirty, ten-thirty or eleven o'clock, we were (being) processed into what was then known as the Hawai'i Territorial Guard.

And around that time, one of the big scare was that there were parachutists up in St. Louis Heights, you know, as we were gathered at the gym. So we all walked out in the field and looked up, and suddenly said, sure enough, you see up on the heights, you see these figures, you know, we could see. You know, we could just barely see these figures up on the hills of St. Louis Heights. And those days, St. Louis Heights was pretty bare yet, not like it is today. And they could see these figures up there, and there was some talk of, "Eh, shall we send a squad up there, get a squad up there and go up there?" [Reports of Japanese paratroopers landing on St. Louis Heights turned out to be a rumor, and the figures KM and the others saw were not those of the enemy (but Sunday hikers).] And none of us knew how to fire the gun, yet. We had just started ROTC (in) September. For most of us, you know, at that point, there weren't too many upperclassmen yet. And things weren't organized yet. We were getting the rifles out of stock, all the rifles had firing pins in Cosmoline, and so most of us were working

on wiping the Cosmoline off and getting the rifles ready. But that was the excitement for the daytime.

And then (in) the evening, we (were somewhat) organized, and we were, all the university students, (most) of (us) were all in First Battalion, A, B, and C companies. And then that evening, we were sent out to various areas as guards, very little instructions, (and) we were given five rounds of ammunition. We were shown how to load the ammunition if necessary, and what to do in case you have to fire. Then we were sent out, I was sent out to the waterfront. And this is now total blackout. So I think two squads, the truck had quite a few of us on board. And we went out, and at various locations, people were dropped off as guards. (At) some places there were two, most places only one. But I understand, the next day that, I think there were a couple of us who (were) supposed to be there only for four-hour shifts, I think. And couple of them, somebody forgot to pick up, because the person that took the first shift [down], wasn't the [same] person who went to deliver the second shift. So the second shift sergeant in charge had no idea (of the whereabouts of) couple of the boys. So that couple of the boys had a very harrowing experience of being out there for eight hours instead of just four hours.

And I don't know if you heard all of the different type of—now, you call it fun, happy incidents. Actually, nobody really got hurt. But the headquarters for the guard was at the old armory, which is the site of the [state] capitol now. And it was whole block, big block, you know. And so patrols were sent out in the evenings also, different patrols. And I understand that two patrols shot at each other because they thought the other was some invaders. But they, you know, every little sound, unknown sound, lot of the boys were trigger-happy. And they supposed to have fired at each other. Fortunately, nobody got hurt. Out in Kalihi at the water pump, water pump and electrical installation, the guards got trigger-happy, and next day they found a cow had been shot right next to the electric, I think it was water pump station out there.

And then that lasted for one, two nights. We were at different areas. Then, most of us got shifted out to Farrington High School or St. Louis High School, which became an emergency hospital, and we became standby guards for a couple more nights, either at Farrington or at St. Louis.

And then about a week or week and a half later, we were better organized, and we were starting to get stationed out into the various utility stations like the water pump station, like the electrical installation. And I was shifted out to Liliha and School Street, there's an electrical installation. At that time, it was a very small installation. Now, it's a big station there. But what we did was, we camped out in the back of that station, in a pyramidal tent. There was a squad of us. And two of us stood guard in the front of the electrical installations. And early in the mornings, these defense workers, you know, they have to catch buses and catch trucks to go to work. And there were quite a few of them living in that area, School Street area. And after the first night, all these people, when they walk on the street, they make big noise to let us know that they coming, see. Otherwise, we were trigger-happy, they didn't know what we're going to do, so they made it a point to cross across the street, walk in front of us, and humming and making noise, dragging cans or something like that, knocking on the fence, knocking the fence, you know, so that we know that they going by.



And we were there for, we were there for quite a—from December.

And then, an incident happened with me which was something to look back to. A couple of weeks after I was there, a man I had known in Maui, who I knew to be living in Maui, came by in the middle of the day one day when I was out standing guard. And you know, we were such tenderfoot that while guarding, we would talk to whoever wanted to talk to us. Lot of times, you know, you weren't supposed to talk to people as you're standing guard. But this man, who I knew, came up and we had a nice chat. He told me about my father having been picked up. Although I knew about it, but he repeated that he had heard that my dad was picked up the first night, December 7th. And I don't recall too much about what else we spoke, but he was there for about half an hour, an old family friend. Lived in Kahului. He was one of the Kobayashi Store, Maui potato chips, Kobayashi workers. (He was younger brother of Shigenaga, former owner of Kaimana Hotel.) And I didn't think anything about it.

Two, three weeks later, we were sent out to Koko Head rifle range. And the day we got there, while I was standing in line for evening chow, a fellow that I knew from Maui—I didn't know him, but I knew of him, he [John Denison Jenkins] was a son of a judge [Albert Edward Jenkins] on Maui, Jenkins, and I think he was my older brother's (Paul Katsuso's) classmate. But he came by in a Chevrolet, and with an army painting on the outside so, you know, we all thought that he was connected with the military somehow. Then, next thing I knew, my first sergeant came up, "Eh, Miho, go along with Jenkins."

"Oh, what for?"

He says, "Oh, just go along with him. He wants to have you go Downtown with him."

So I went along. We drove all the way back. Very little conversation going to—and was kind of getting dark already. And we got into town, and took me into Dillingham building. Later I found out it was Dillingham building. On the third floor, it was all dark. Got into a room, and then I was interrogated (chuckles) at that point. It turned out—well, he tell me, "Oh how are you? How you feel being in the guard? Are you enjoying the routine? By the way, did you get to talk to so and so recently?" And immediately, I couldn't recall having talked to this person. "Didn't you meet somebody one day when you were standing guard?" Then I did recall that. He said, "What did you talk about?"

I says, "Gee, I don't recall particularly what we talked about, but we exchanged pleasantries, old family friend." And then they started to ask me if he talked about anything connected with the military or did he inquire anything about what we were doing or anything. I said, "No, no, no." But it turned out the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] was following this gentleman (Shigenaga) all over Honolulu. And I was one of the contacts that he had made, that, immediately after the war started. Then he said that I was all right.

I found out later that he was a lieutenant colonel named [Robert] Stevenson. And I always thought it was Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson because that's the only Stevenson I knew. And recently, at the University of Hawai'i football games, Mr. Stevenson and family sit next to us. So I said, "You know, Bob, I've been trying to tell you, but do you recall interrogating me back in '41?"

And he says, “No, no,” he was never in G-2. So he says, “No, no. It’s another one. I think there’s another, Harold Stevenson, I think that was with G-2 at that time. That’s who I think did the interrogation.” [The name of the interrogator could not be confirmed.] But all these years, I thought it was Mr. Bob Stevenson who sat next to us at the football games, and I’ve been waiting for years to ask him.

(Laughter)

KM: Now I got confirmation that it wasn’t him.

(Laughter)

KM: But, we had a lot of laughs because—oh, real scared stiff, you know, being in the guard and being interrogated as to what I talked to this gentleman on the street. But I was thinking, gee, the FBI—I didn’t see anybody else, but you know, they evidently were keeping tab on this guy. And he was supposedly very active in being a pro-Japanese. In fact, his older brother, who I knew personally, was referred to as “Emperor so-and-so,” you know. And I think even in the Japanese community, known as “Emperor so-and-so.” Such a vocal pro-Japanese gentleman. But he passed away a few years ago, so it’s all right for me to say this. But he was very much pro-Japanese. The brother evidently was also pro-Japanese and they were keeping a tab on his contacts. (Older Shigenaga was owner of Kaimana Hotel.)

But then, one morning, two o’clock in the morning, we got a call from headquarters to pack up. And just pack up, so we—you know, army was everything, you don’t question, you just obey. So we packed up and we were waiting. We had to wait until about five-thirty. And a truck came to pick us up. We went to Lanakila School, where the whole battalion (was) gathered. I found out that the whole First Battalion, entire battalion was gathered there. And after we had gathered there, Major [Charles “Rusty”] Frazier, he was the deputy commander of the battalion, came up and started to speak and tell us why we were gathered there. And he started to explain by saying that the local officers of the battalion and the guard did everything they could to try and stop what was going to happen.

And what was going to happen was that all of us who were of Japanese ancestry was being (immediately) discharged involuntarily. And the reason why, as he explained it, was that the security of the island of O’ahu came under the command of an officer from somewhere out in the east. I think he said someplace like New York. And as he inspected the island and made his tour, he saw all of these vital installations being guarded by what he thought were Orientals. Upon further investigation, he found out that the roster of the Hawai’i Territorial Guard was made up almost entirely of Japanese-Americans. And he just couldn’t stand it, and he just couldn’t take it. He says no telling what will happen, and made an order that all of us would be immediately discharged. And in spite of all the efforts of our local—because like Johnny Naumu was one of the officers. Tommy Kaulukukui was one of the officers, Major Frazier was the deputy commander. My company commander was Francis Aiwohi, the football coach, University of Hawai’i, this and that. And they were all our officers and whatnot. But in spite of that, we were ordered discharged. And so, reluctantly and disappointedly, all of us got discharged, and I went back to Maui.

And when I got back to Maui, I was told immediately by my friends that all what you had to have was a hammer, saw, and square, and you were a carpenter helper even though you (didn't) know how to use the saw or what. And so I did apply for a job, and got a job immediately working in the defense project out in Pu'unēnē, building the airfield at Pu'unēnē for the, I think it was a navy because it was a navy construction. And I worked from February of 1942 when we got discharged—I say kicked out—to March of 1943 when I volunteered for the 442[nd Regimental Combat Team].

Some of my friends, at that time—I had signed up to volunteer for whatever the military could do. But somehow, I never did get the notice. So my friends formed the VVV at that point, Varsity Victory Volunteers [officially called the Corps of Engineers Auxiliary], who, a couple of months after the discharge from the [Hawai'i] Territorial Guard, volunteered as a labor battalion for, out in Schofield, from which many of the leaders of our community after the war volunteered. And their record of service as laborers was such that together with the 100th Infantry's record, together with their record and whatever else that the niseis were not doing or doing, the army and the president thought that it would be an ideal situation to ask or form a unit of Japanese-American soldiers. And that was the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

In the very early stages, as I understand it, the idea was to get out of the so-called relocation centers, the young men, and have them go into the service because they were having a lot of problems out there with the young men. And so they said that there would be some 3,500 from relocation centers all over the states, and maybe 1,500 from Hawai'i, and make this Regimental Combat Team of 5,000 niseis. And when they issued a call for volunteers, there were hardly any volunteers from the Mainland. I understand Mike Masaoka claims that he was the first volunteer for 442. Maybe he may have some records there, but from Hawai'i, 10,000 volunteered. And as a result of the lack of response on the Mainland, they decided to accept, I think, about 3,000 or thereabouts from Hawai'i. And later, as they would from the Mainland. So the first batch of volunteers from Hawai'i was about 3,000 or 3,500 of us who joined the 442 and made the nucleus of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

MK: Okay, we'll end here.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is a continuation of the Katsugo Miho interview. This is videotape number four.

MK: Tape number four, interview with Katsugo Miho. And we know that you were one of those thousands of volunteers for the 442. Can you tell us how you made that decision to join the 442?

KM: Okay. This goes back prior to the war. There was a movement in Hawai'i of which my brother [Katsuaki] immediately above me had (been) involved, he was rather involved in a movement to expatriate (our) Japanese citizenship. In other words, cutting off your Japanese citizenship. Those of us who were born at that generation were, by virtue of birth and by virtue of family ties, dual citizens, Americans as well as Japanese citizens. And prior to the

war, two, three years before the war, there was a movement by niseis in Hawai'i, as well as on the Mainland, let's prove the loyalty to the United States government by voluntarily cutting ties and (renouncing) our Japanese citizenship.

And my brother Katsuaki was very much involved in that movement as a member of the University of Hawai'i student[s]. And he had been (keeping me informed about the movement). And a couple of times when he came back to home, he would explain to me about this movement. And my argument, at that point, which I did argue with him was that I was not in favor of this because, why should we, as individuals, do something [to change our dual citizenship status] which, by law, was permissible, and was allowed by both governments? And I saw nothing wrong with being an American citizen as well as a Japanese citizen because it was understood, recognized. There was nothing to be proved by the fact that we (renounce) something which was attained by law.

Well anyway, this movement was on, and prior to the 442 being formed, he was—after the war started, he stayed back in Honolulu working as a city and county paramedical here, being accepted to go to Tulane [University] Medical School when he graduated. And when the war started, that terminated his plan then and there, but he stayed on as a paramedic and stayed at Atherton House, and was very close with Hung Wai Ching and my other brother [Katsuro] who was working, helping in the Emergency Service Committee and all that. So he knew about this, ahead of time, he knew about the formation of the 442. And he came home and told me one day, came home to say good-bye, actually, to our mother, that pretty soon, that he'd be joining an army. And he came home to tell me that, be prepared to volunteer if I wanted to, that the all-nisei unit was going to be formed.

And I remember we had one whole night of argument because I said he did not have to volunteer. I felt that, you know, I told him this. I told him that he should stay as a doctor. He didn't have to volunteer. I would volunteer. He said, "No." He said, "Individual matter. Individual has to prove to the country what you are." And so he volunteered. And I volunteered. The net result of it was that three months, four months had gone into training, he was involved in an automobile accident, and he (became) the first casualty of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Real unfortunate accident, because at that time he was in Dolton, Alabama. He was supposed to start the army ASTP, [army] special training program, where the army would allow him to go to medical school to become a doctor. And he went to Alabama with the idea that after two weeks, he would go to New Orleans, right nearby Alabama, and start Tulane [University] Medical School, which was interrupted by the war. And that was already in the plans. Unfortunately, he got involved in this accident.

But, prior to his death, he called me one day at camp, came by to my training area, says, "Eh, I went to see Dad."

I says, "What do you mean, you went to see Dad?"

He says, "Yeah, Dad is right nearby in (Camp Livingston,) [Louisiana]."

I said, "How did you find out about it?"

"Oh, a few of us found out that the parents were interned, they're prisoners of war in (Camp Livingston,) [Louisiana]." I forgot the name of the camp there. [It was Camp Livingston.] But he says there's a way of going out there. Catch the bus and get out there, and call in the officer of the day, and then you get to (visit) with (Dad) for one (or two hours).

So the next weekend we—I went on the bus, and then I saw on the bus, there's three or four others. I say, "Where you going?"

They say, "Oh, I going see my dad."

(Chuckles)

KM: So I ended up with about five of us. And there was just enough time from Camp Shelby [in Mississippi] to get to (Camp Livingston,) [Louisiana], call in the officer of the day, two o'clock in the morning, tell him to get our parents ready, and that we go down there, and by taxi, we catch the taxi out there. And from about five o'clock to six o'clock or six-thirty, I think it was, that we were allowed the visitation, in the quonset hut, visitor's quonset hut for prisoners of war. And as prisoners of war, there were all kinds of signs. "Speak English Only," and visitors on one side of the table and the POWs [prisoners of war] on the other side of the table. But this officer of the day, when he saw us in uniform, his jaws dropped, and he told the two guards, "You get out of the quonset hut, leave these people alone." And so we had freedom of visitation for about an hour and a half in [Louisiana].

And my dad was taking it very nicely. All the Japanese isseis, I think, were being treated really nice because by physical appearance, there was no way they could run away. So they would give you a lot of freedom. And they had a lot of outings that they would go out to, one, two guards instead of being, you know, looked over by four or five guards, or forty or fifty people could go out with one guard or two guards. And I think the Japanese people there, actually, they don't complain. And so, I think the American security was more lenient to them than, as I understand, there were also German, and there were also Italian (civilian) prisoners of war, (all) considered prisoners of war.

And when my brother died, we had to—my other brother Paul and I, we had to go to Missoula, Montana to take the urn, to take to my father for services. And so he and I traveled by slow train. Those days, that Southern Mississippi train was loaded to the tilt with GIs [members of the U.S. armed forces], and I don't know how many days it took us from Alabama, all the way to Missoula, Montana, by way of Chicago. And when we got there, and I had this American-flag-draped urn turned over to my father, the guards couldn't say anything. They couldn't believe that I was in uniform, yet that the flag draped was an American soldier. But, it was an emotional (meeting) but when I told my father good-bye that second time, it was really difficult for me to say good-bye to him because he lost one son already, even before going to battle, you know. I think it would have been easier for my dad to have taken it if my brother got killed on the battlefield. But, with such promise and a future to look to, to get, to die in such a fashion, in an accident, automobile accident. There were twenty-nine or thirty passengers in the two and a half ton truck which overturned on the highway that he was the first one to be killed. Two boys got killed, but being the medic, he could have been of help to anybody else who was injured. But in this accident, he got killed



outright. So it struck my dad real bad.

And when I left him, I told him that we were just about, basic training was just about over. And it was September of 194[3]. And I thought, at that time, that we'd be going overseas pretty soon. As it turned out, from September, we were in Camp Shelby until April of 1944, you know. We continued training there. But in the meantime, we did communicate by letters. We did communicate. He sent me some dried fish because—dried trout which he catch out on outings in Missoula, Montana. But, then I was a member of the artillery. Four forty-second had a field artillery battalion. We served in Italy, France. And then we were in with General [George] Patton in the invasion of Germany. And we occupied Germany from the end of the war until December of 1945. And finally came home in December and started school in 1946 as soon as we came home. I reached Honolulu in January, I think, January 8th, or thereabouts. And one week later, the second semester started, the University, so we were back in school.

MK: You know, backing up a little bit, sometimes when we've talked to your Democratic colleagues, you know, of your age who went through the war, they've told us that during the war years, you know, they would sometimes sit around and talk about Hawai'i politics, and that they would like to come back to Hawai'i and work towards changing the inequities that they noticed. Did you ever get involved in that kind of conversations?

KM: With the group of battery mates that I was with, we didn't have too much political conversations. Those who became involved in politics from my immediate group, we had two judges. But no politicians, per se. Supreme Court Justice Edward Nakamura and Judge [Edwin] Honda were in my immediate battery. They were the intellectuals of our group. Really, you know. Of course, we had Ted Tsukiyama, but Ted was involuntarily volunteered for the interpreters two months after we were there. He was just taken out and then he went to [Camp Savage in] Minnesota, to become an interpreter. But no, I don't remember too heavy discussions in that regard. No.

WN: What about social type discussions? For example, you growing up on Maui, you know, the *Haoles* were here and the Japanese were here. You know, serving, what happened during the war, being with your father and your brother, and you as a soldier. Did that, you know, did that ever come to a—were there, was there any connection that you made at any time during that time, and what you could apply to the future?

KM: Well, cultural background, all of us came from the same stock. We all grew up in a community of basic, cultural, Japanese-dominated communities. So, being of the same background, we never had too much discussion about it, whatever it was. If there were others who may have been exposed, you know, those usually were the little older ones or those who were living in Honolulu, I think. Those who came from Honolulu were more exposed to those so-called politically motivated problems. Island guys from Maui, we were not aware because we were so centered around our own community. Although there were, sometimes there were incidents where we couldn't understand why someone who was killed by the Caucasian man who was driving the car, and supposedly under the influence of liquor, got away with hardly any kind of punishment. I recall one, but that's one out of how many years, you know. And basically, it wasn't that much of an incident to be that concerned about. You grew up thinking

that that's the way how life was, that all the white-collar jobs were for the Caucasians, except for a few niseis who were able to succeed in other areas other than stevedoring or other than a plantation. Because, those who did clerical work were kind of in-between. And town people were kind of in-between, you know, as compared to stevedore families. And so, but politically, it was not at a time when we [were] affected by politics, per se, you know. So, although I can understand those who came from Honolulu where many of them were held down because of politics. Because as I understand political Honolulu, you could advance if you wanted to. But because of discrimination, that they could not get above whatever strata you wanted to get out from. But on Maui, it was not like that, you know.

MK: I know that, you know, after the war, you came back. You went to the University of Hawai'i, and then you decided to go to law school. What law school did you go and why did you go to law school?

KM: I was very much involved in student government at the University of Hawai'i. Very active. As a matter of fact, I was a member of the so-called board of—what did we call ourselves at that time? Board of Governors or what was it . . .

WN: Oh, you mean the, now, today is ASUH [Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i].

KM: ASUH student—now they call it senate, but in those days, our days . . .

WN: Student government.

KM: . . . student government, well for the board of directors. And my last year was president of the senior class. So being involved that much in student government and activities. Community service and whatnot were something to be looked into or to be part of your life. My father's participation, I think, has always influenced, at least my family, into being more outwardly involved with community activities and being part of your broader scope of your community, other than your immediate, you know, whatever activity that you were doing.

And somehow I decided to go to law school towards the end of my college years. Number one, I guess my older brother [Katsuro] had an influence because he was already a lawyer. And upon finding out, looking into the law schools, we found that George Washington [University, in Washington D.C.] was one of the schools that was easier for Hawai'i students to get into, as well as being in the nation's capitol, it was attractive, as well as the fact that Harvard was expensive, and Yale was expensive. You couldn't see getting up there and getting involved, and I had to primarily depend on my GI benefits. I preserved my GI benefits for school until after college because while going to University of Hawai'i, I participated in senior ROTC so that I would get allowances for the years that I was at University of Hawai'i. So I was looking towards going to law school based on my benefits as a veteran. And I did, as a matter of fact, go on that basis. So George Washington was where I ended up. And when I got up there, I found out that gee, there were about twenty of us in the same boat. We all ended up in George Washington.

MK: I guess we'll continue on the next tape.

END OF SIDE TWO

CASSETTE TAPE NO. 17-37-1-89; SIDE ONE

JC: The following is a continuation of the Katsugo Miho interview. This is videotape number five.

MK: Okay. You were saying that back then at George Washington Law School, there were at least twenty of you local boys there. Can you tell us about the local men who were there with you?

KM: Yes, when we got up there, John Desha was just finishing up. And Shigeto Kanemoto, George Holt, [Elias] P. Yadao, Sumio Nakashima, John Ushijima, Senator [Daniel] Inouye, who else? Oh, Alexander Kim, and I forgot, since there were. . . . But there were more of us there at that period, '49 to '53, '54, of Hawai'i students. Together with Georgetown [University] students, we had so many that we used to have, in fact one year, 1951, I think, we held a Hawai'i pageant at the Sheraton Hotel, which was **the** hotel at that time. Prince, princesses, *kāhili* bearers, and we also served Hawaiian foods, like a luau. It was a very festive, and a big occasion with all the—at that time, it was. . . . Was it [Joseph] "Joe" Farrington? I think it was Joe Farrington, yet, I think, who was a delegate. And besides that, we would also have various smaller groups of students getting together, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and very congenial group. Donald Ching, future politicians.

At one time, we figured it out that George Washington [University]'s influence in the legislature, state legislature. Both clerks of the house and the senate, Shigeto was—Kanemoto was in the house and [Seichi] "Shadow" Hirai was in the senate. John Ushijima was one of the big shots in the senate. And Donald Ching was one of the big shots in the house. And the George Washington graduates, at one point, had a tremendous influence in the state legislature.

But John Ushijima and I were roommates for about a year and a half. And we had some good times. He would cook for one week, and I would cook for one week. In between, we would visit with Senator Inouye and his wife. And they'd come over once a week, and we'd go over to them, and Mrs. [Margaret] Inouye was trying out all kinds of recipes on us, Hawaiian-style that, she was trying to remember or expose us to, you know.

And I know you're going to ask me about my political life, but during that period, [John A.] "Jack" Burns, Governor Burns quite often made trips to Washington D.C. And one of my pet peeves with John and I, basically was that, he [Burns] would come over, but he rather get together with Dan [Inouye]. And we were never invited, John and I. (Chuckles) And I often wondered why. But I guess the governor was never the outgoing type, and maybe Dan, purposely just kept it down to the bare minimum. But I knew it was politically involved, politically motivated and being kind of kept out of it, was kind of a disappointment at that time. You know, you going to law school, you thinking of the future, you thinking of eventualities, and knowing what's going on. You wanted to hear what's going on in Hawai'i. Wanted to hear, but unfortunately, during that time, John and I were kept out of it.



WN: What was John Burns's, what was he doing at that time when you were going to law school?

KM: I think he had run for delegate, and that was the time he didn't make it, I think. That was during that period that he didn't make it.

WN: Oh yeah, '48, yeah.

KM: Yeah. I think he had not made it at that point. So he was keeping up with politics, per se, as to what was going on. So he made quite frequent trips to Washington D.C.

MK: You know, back in those days, you're with John Ushijima, Senator Inouye, and others who would become active in politics. Were you folks talking politics back then?

KM: Not particularly. I don't remember getting involved with political discussions. We were, at that point, basically, more homesick than anything else, I think, you know. The gatherings were for purposes of getting a sense of balance while going to law school. Because law school, you know, you were so intensely involved in keeping up your homework and everyday activities that we often had to have breaks. (Dogs barking in background.) And any kind of an excuse to get together was a means of escape.

WN: Did you have any kind of inclination as to what the future held by talking to, or seeing Burns coming? What went through your mind when somebody like John Burns would come often to Hawai'i to talk—I mean to Washington to talk to Dan Inouye? Was there anything in your mind at that time?

KM: No, nothing, nothing, nothing. Nothing in particular so to speak, you know.

MK: Okay. I know that you graduated from law school. You came back, what did you do?

KM: I started off working for my brother's firm which was then known as [Hiram] Fong, [Katsuro] Miho. And I think was [Herbert] Choy, later on, Fong, Miho, Choy. And that's where I got my initial exposure to the practice of law. I started practicing in 1954.

MK: Okay. And also, being with your brother's firm, you came to know Hiram Fong.

KM: Yes, he was already very much a politician. He was the speaker of the house, at that point. Remember he got involved with that big hassle with Charlie Kauhane at that time, and my brother was also very much involved in politics as a Democrat. And I often wondered how the two, [Katsuro] being a Democrat, and Hiram being such a strong Republican, you know. But my orientation to politics, under that circumstances, exposed me to more politics geared from personality instead of so-called partisanship politics. My brother being a Democrat, Hiram being a Republican, campaign time, he would be involved with helping Hiram. And I knew as a result of which, my elder brother was never fully accepted by the hard-core partisan Democrats.

And I think it wore off on me, too, because I did not get involved in strictly partisan politics on either side. Although I worked, my first involvement in politics was working for Mayor

[John] Wilson's last campaign, I helped out as a campaign worker. Then I also got involved in Joe Farrington's campaign. Then I was also involved with Sparky Matsunaga, Masato Doi, Clarence Taba, who were all Democrats, and Hiram Fong, Hiram Fong's campaign, very much involved. So politics and my exposure, was politics of a non-partisan type of politics, that politics was an individual activity, so to speak, depending on who the individual was, what he stood for, and what he stood for may not have been strictly partisan politics by the rule, so to speak, by party platform, and this and that, was not a criteria for partisan politics. And so one day, back in 1958, I was called to Hiram's office. And Hiram said, "Eh, the mayor is looking for a nisei to run on his team."

I said, "What are you talking about?"

He said, "Oh, his last," of course we didn't know it was last, but that was in the 1958 campaign. And it was a board of supervisors running the city. And Mayor [Neal] Blaisdell was running for reelection, and he needed a slate of people so that it would be an exposure of balanced team. He had only one nisei running for board of supervisors when there were eight or nine seats. He needed another one.

And just about the time that this was going on, early in the morning, I had been talking to Donald Ching, and Donald Ching had said, "I think about time you start signing a party card." And as much as he knew, I had worked for Clarence and Masato, and Matsunaga, and all that.

I said, "Okay, okay." And then this conversation came in, and they needed a decision right away. I think it was just about the last day to file papers and whatnot.

So I got talked into by Blaisdell, Fong and my brother. The argument being that, at that time in 1958, the 1954 revolution had started. And all of the niseis were becoming Democrats. Sparky Matsunaga, who I thought was a Republican, ran as a Democrat. And most of my friends were becoming Democrats or aligned with the Democratic party. And the argument was made that if all of the niseis became Democrats, for the future of Hawai'i, for the good of Hawai'i, it could never become beneficial. And being that tenderfoot that I was, I thought that—and having been exposed to individual politics, non-diehard, partisan politics, I thought I could live with it. And I ran as a Republican, which was a surprise to a great many people. A great many disappointed. Got called names by Donald Ching after that. (WN chuckles.) But he still remained a very good friend of mine. And I found out that, yes, you could live under that individual, independent member of a party. And you know, the argument was made that, work from within, that if the Republican party was ultra-conservative, why, a liberal-minded Republican could be of influence from within the party to expose liberal ideas, to encourage and to try to convert some of the conservative Republicans towards your way of thinking. Some of which in my years, basically, eleven to twelve years of active politics, I saw some leeway in that regard. But it's hard. It was a hard hoe to grind. Very hard.

MK: You know being, you have nisei background, having been a 442 member, how did other Republicans receive your membership in the party? How did they react to your joining the Republicans?

KM: Niseis?

MK: Republicans. How did Republicans react to your joining the Republican party, given your background?

KM: In the very beginning, I was welcomed with open arms, very much so. Towards the end, I suppose they become, you become known. The stands that you have taken on so-called partisan issues where I may have differed, and I said it is not a partisan issue, that it is an individual matter. And many times, people make it into partisan issues when it should not be a partisan issue. And we've had occasions when this have come out. Budgetary wise, this brings to my mind the most critical kinds of issues where it is not strictly partisan issue, but they make it into a partisan issue. And then I vote the other way, and then in the latter days of my political career, I don't think some of the Republicans were too enthused about my stand that I've taken on some key issues.

MK: We know that '58, you ran for the board of supervisors. You didn't make it that time, but then you ran in '59 for the state house, and you served in the legislative, in that legislative body from '59 to '70.

KM: That's right.

MK: And we were wondering, why did you try for the state house? What got you involved in that?

KM: The house?

MK: Mm hmm.

KM: Oh, having run in '58, and having lost, and lived in Mānoa. Mānoa was supposed to have been a very wide-open community. It had a reputation of strong areas of Republican, strong areas of Democrats, and independent areas where people were nonpartisan, so to speak. And I had a group of supporters at that point, already, who had helped me in my campaign in '58. They came and they said, you know, it's a waste of time, and having already exposed yourself once, and then to just let it die without making any other effort. So let's give it a try, and see what can be accomplished in running for the house. And so we got together and we said, okay, let's do it. And then, in those days, running didn't involve that much of money. In fact, I never had, in all the years of, eleven years of politics, I never had a fund-raising party or anything like that. Never did. Pure volunteer contributions from friends and supporters is how I got in.

MK: And back then, how did you folks campaign?

KM: Oh, it was then when you put up posters. All the years that we could, we could put up posters. So these big posters on friend's yard, was a key ingredient. And I was fortunate to have many friends who allowed me to put up these signs. And so the major task of campaigning was putting up these signs and taking them down again.

MK: (Chuckles) I think we'll end right here.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is a continuation of the Katsugo Miho interview. This is videotape number six.

MK: Okay. So '59, you ran for the house, you were there until '70, and you were just talking about campaigning. What else did you folks do to campaign back then?

KM: The basic campaigning was putting up posters. That was the basic. Although we did have rallies yet, but sparsely attended to. Very little people. It was a dying thing, having rallies at Kānewai Park and rallies at Punahou Square, and rallies at Mānoa Pavilion or whatever. Well, that was gradually. . . . We had musicians those days, and you know, I think '59, you could even have people passing out cards at the polling booth, you know. There wasn't that 1,000 feet or whatever restrictions then. People right outside of the entrance, were passing out cards. That was the type of campaigning. But campaigning, very little in terms of TV expenses. And so the cost of campaigning was at the bare minimum. You didn't owe obligations to too many people.

MK: That's important. (Chuckles)

KM: Oh yeah. I think the type of campaigning now is, yeah, and then you work—I never really did solicit. So I felt that whoever made contributions to my campaign did it voluntarily, morally voluntarily, and I felt that I was in no way obligated to whoever made those contributions.

MK: How much support did you get from the party?

KM: Monetary-wise?

MK: Monetary or whatever . . .

KM: Very little, monetary-wise. And in terms of work force, hardly any. Hardly any. It was my friends and my supporters who worked on my campaign.

MK: And then when you got in into the state house, that was the first state house, you're a freshman representative, and I know that you were able to accomplish something very important that year.

KM: (Chuckles) Well.

MK: Tell us about that.

KM: Yeah, when I was in Washington going to school, I had met a friend who lived in an apartment, and they called it a condominium. And I was surprised to find out that people had an interest in the apartments that they were living in, together with everybody else, whether it was a leasehold, whether it was in fee, they had a proportionate interest. Not being only something that somebody else owned, the master leased to. I had remembered about this. And when I came back, when I got involved and got elected, Mr. Mun On Chun, from Finance Factors reminded me, or told me about this concept of condominium, and that something

was. . . . And the federal government made some recognition of the condominium, and that Puerto Rico was planning something then, that year, I think was 1961.

So Hiram Fong was in the senate, so we got in touch with the senator's office and got him to get us a copy of the Puerto Rican act. And immediately, I introduced the measure in the house, and I'm pretty sure it was Senator [Richard J.] Lyman [Jr.] who introduced a counterpart in the senate. In the first state legislature, the house was dominated by the Democrats, and the senate was Republican-controlled. So by virtue of that, people got involved—the senate had hearings on this, the house hardly had any hearings. But because of the interest of the people in the industry, real estate brokers, financial institutions, saw the need for this new law.

A few years before that, we had a fiasco of co-ops, developers, who took in some money from prospective buyers and embezzled, absconded with the money without any protection to the investors. And so this law was supposed to give individual owners rights like independent owners. You could finance your individual apartment completely separate from the rest of the owners. And towards the end of the session, both house and senate bills were passed and transferred over to each other. By protocol and past habit, past practice, the first measure that reaches the other house is the one that you act on. And it so happened that Senator Lyman's bill, it went over to the house. And my house bill went over to the senate after the house received the senator's bill. By protocol, the senator's bill was the only one that would be acted upon. Mine would be, for all intents and purposes, dead. But between Senator [Yasutaka] Fukushima who was the chairman of the senate judiciary, and Judge Chang, [Robert] Won Bae Chang who was the judiciary chairman, they were playing politics of the bills that Senator Chang wanted out of the senate, senate wanted their bills out of the house, and they were negotiating.

In the meantime, time was running out. And it got to a point of all negotiations being dropped between them. At that point, Senator Fukushima passed the bill, the house bill that was in his hands without making any amendments to it, and then he passed it. It went to the governor for signature because everybody was anxious to have that bill. The governor signed it. The governor was Governor [William] Quinn who was a Republican at that time. He had no objection to signing a Republican measure from the house. And in all these years that I know, politics being dominated by the Democrats now, I don't know of any other major bill that's been passed by a minority member. And it's been in the books, it's been improved upon, and this is the basis upon which our condominium is now being developed. Back in 1961, 1962, the impetus on development was this condominium bill.

MK: And we can see, twenty-seven years later, that really had an impact.

KM: Oh, yes it is, yeah.

MK: Yeah.

KM: I'm very happy that I had a part in it. (Chuckles) Yeah.

MK: And you know, you mentioned that Governor Quinn, you know, was a Republican back then,

well, he still is Republican, and I was wondering, what is your evaluation of Quinn as governor?

KM: As governor, I think Bill did a good job. He did not play partisan politics as he should have, if he wanted to continue to be a governor. That was his mistake, I think. He should have established closer ties with the legislators. He should have gone out to the public more often to keep up. You see, if I remember correctly, he was the first elected governor. But prior to that, he was appointed, right? So he was not exposed to the rigors of elective system. He was not exposed to the fact that you had to work to be elected. That you had to keep certain ties. That you had to reward your workers. He tried to be the statesman, I think, too early. He was more of a statesman than a politician. Unfortunately, you do that, it may be good for your political status, but as an individual, I think that's the reason why he didn't get reelected.

WN: How would you characterize the Republican party at that time? Were there people like Fong, Blaisdell, Quinn who were very popular people but not really strongly Republican, in the Republican sense of the word? Would that be accurate to say the Republican party was like consistent . . .

KM: Unfortunately, the Republican party had leaders like Hiram, had leaders like Blaisdell, but who did not play partisan politics and, basically, did not transfer their individual benefits to party, per se. But it's hard, it's hard. Well, I think if they did that, they would have not been reelected, too. But their first premise was to be reelected, and to be reelected, they had to separate themselves from the ultra-conservative members of the Republican party who were very shortsighted, who—let's face it—were conservative and were not keeping up with the times.

WN: Who were some of the ultra-conservatives of the party, at that time?

KM: Well, I don't want to point fingers, but, on a party partisan level, those who were active in partisan politics were not a diverse group, you know, unfortunately. And so they represented a small segment of the larger membership of the Republican party. This was, I think, their biggest fault.

WN: Well, would you say like, Ben Dillingham was one of the—this faction of the party, one of the heads of that faction?

KM: Ben Dillingham was for Ben Dillingham. I don't think he was, basically, that involved in partisan politics. I was never close to the so-called party leadership, you know. They never came down to my level, so to speak. I mean, in line of communications. Even I was strictly on my own, basically. So, and we left it on that basis.

MK: You know, during those early years of your political activity, the Democratic party was building up, they were actively recruiting AJAs [Americans of Japanese Ancestry]. What was the Republican party doing when all this was occurring?

KM: I don't know. They thought that—see, I was never with the so-called establishment of the Republican party. And so I was never recruited other than by Blaisdell, Hiram Fong and my



brother. Not from the party. Blaisdell needed a balanced team. That was the basis of my being recruited, see. Not the party needed you. Of course, in the argument, yes, the party was, "Hey, all of you niseis cannot become all Democrats," you know. But party-wise, I don't know of any concerted effort to get the niseis to become party members.

MK: Okay.

WN: What about the people that ran with you, say, in the fifteenth district, like Dorothy Devereaux, Eureka Forbes. Were they what you would call more independent types?

KM: No, you would call strictly party. Dorothy had lot of ties with the public, also. Hiram Fong, Jr. was basically independent also.

MK: How about Percy Mirikitani?

KM: Percy was a smooth politician. As smooth as they come.

(Laughter)

WN: Okay, moving right along.

MK: You know, since we've opened up our discussion of people who served with you from the fifteenth district, Mānoa to Waikīkī, maybe you can comment on these men, Tom Gill, Clarence Akizaki, James Shigemura, Stuart Ho, Charlie Ushijima, those Democrats who served with your Republican counterparts, Mrs. Devereaux, Mrs. Forbes, Representative Mirikitani, and Hiram Fong, Jr.

KM: Well, Tom Gill, I admired. But he's someone a little bit beyond more than I could follow. I think he was too much in advance, and one track-minded. Not broad in the scope of being available to everybody. I think his stand for a union philosophy, basically, colored his position on a lot of things. He couldn't be flexible. I could easily relate to Charles Ushijima, Jimmy Shigemura, even Hiram Fong, Jr. I had great difficulty relating to Eureka Forbes, sometimes with Dorothy Devereaux or Percy Mirikitani. And who were the others that you mentioned?

MK: Stuart Ho.

KM: Who?

MK: Stuart Ho.

KM: Oh Stuart. Stuart does, lot of times, you know, he was in there such a short time, and you kind of, you felt concern for him because . . .

(Dog barks. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

KM: I've always kind of felt sorry for Stuart, because Stuart, in his individual capacity, was such a

capitalist, knowing that he was such a capitalist; yet in his political dealings, having turned Democrat, I think he had the hardest time living up to what was expected of him as a Democrat. And he had a very difficult role to play. Although he had all the capability of becoming a, you know, good politician, but I think that was a very impossible role for him to accept.

MK: And during those years, '59 to '70, the speakers were Elmer Cravalho and Tadao Beppu. What's your estimation of these two men as leaders?

KM: Elmer was very much—well, let's put it this way. He was in absolute control of his house. He knew everything that was going on. And I frequently had lunch with Shigeto [Kanemoto], and sometimes the speaker would come along. So I got to see his method of operation. As an example, one time we were out to lunch, and then, I don't know where it was, but then several people came inside with some of the house members. Immediately, notes were taken with who and who was with whom, you know. And that's what he did. And he got reports from different people about who was seen with whom at all times. And I guess it was always tied in with whatever legislative matters were pending. So whether that in and of itself was important, I don't think it is. It's among many other information that he would gather. But he had a network of information that was really unbelievable. Even within my side of the fence.

MK: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

JC: The following is a continuation of the Katsugo Miho interview. This is videotape number seven, and it's the last tape for the interview.

MK: Tape seven with Katsugo Miho. I think you were just about to start talking about Tadao Beppu. How was he as a speaker?

KM: Yeah, after living through the control of the house by Elmer, there was a drastic change when Tadao became the speaker. And in the beginning, we were kind of anxious to find out just what type of a speaker he would be that, you know, we knew he wouldn't be as rough as Elmer was. And it turned out that way. You know, he was not that 100 percent dominating force like Elmer was.

MK: How would you describe his style of getting people together?

KM: Well, I wasn't too much involved at that point, but he was not as in control as Elmer was, and I think he delegated some of his powers in that respect to different people. You know, if I recall correctly.

MK: Okay. And I know that in '70, you ran for the senate, and in that particular race, you did



not . . .

KM: Yeah, that was . . .

MK: . . . get in. And after that, from '71 to '79, you were a family court judge.

KM: Mm hmm. Whatever it is, we were called referees. And after two and a half years, then they established district judges of the court system. District judges were appointed by the chief—no, the referees were appointed by the chief judge of the family court. And the district judges are now appointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court.

MK: And now, I kind of want to ask you some reflective questions. You were in office for many years, '59 to '70. How did you see politics change during those years?

KM: Fifty-nine to '70?

MK: Yeah.

KM: Well being part of the process, I don't think you see the change. Even today, when you reflect back to it, change, if anything, is basically is the makeup. The makeup of the legislature nowadays, you don't have as many lawyers as we used to. You have more, so-called, full-time legislators who profess to be full-time, and electing has become much, much more expensive. And in that regard, I think, the legislators lose a lot of independence in order to run an expensive campaign, you owe a lot of people obligations. And you know, you cannot be naive to think that if a person contributes \$25, and a person contributes \$1,000, then you're not going to listen more to the guy who gives you \$1,000 than the \$25 man, or a group of people who come in and contribute \$100 each. Or, you know, I mean, this is human nature. And by the same token, when they become legislators, you want to have independence in your legislators who don't owe obligations to different groups or different people.

And yet, on the other hand, you got to say that these people get in because, in the beginning, they are of that frame of mind, and their supporters who back them up are of the same, similar frame of mind. That would be all right. But unfortunately, I think once they get established, and vested interest will back up the winner. And as you become a single member [from a district], you find more and more, the affluent—not affluent, I take that back—the ones who want to be influential, to contribute, and somehow establish a relationship with your legislator in such a fashion that sometimes, you have legislators too closely aligned to certain factions of the community. And that's not good for legislative process.

MK: Warren.

WN: I forgot what I was going to ask. Oh, do you have any regrets not being a Democrat?

KM: Sometimes. Sometimes I often wonder what it would have been had I been a Democrat. Because in all these years of my being in politics, my close personal friends continue to be those who are either Democrats or inclined to be Democrats. And I must say that I've been very fortunate in that I was able to continue the relationship with my friends in that respect.

But you often wonder, you know. You made decisions along the way, and what things would have been, how different it would have been had you taken the road to the left instead of to the right.

MK: You know, there have been politicians who've made party switches. Did you at any time consider switching to the Democratic party?

KM: Part of my cultural background, I think, prevented me from making such a switch. To me, making a switch is not an individual decision. You see, when I declared myself to be a Republican, I got involved with people who became Republicans or who worked for Republicans because of my connection or because of my relationship. And having done so, I cannot see myself switching in view of what my friends have done all these years, and that it would be wrong for me only as an individual to switch party. There are other things besides just yourself. I would rather quit politics than to switch. I think that is the more appropriate way.

WN: I have one more question. What is your evaluation or assessment of Hiram Fong, and to, really, what extent did he play an influence in your political career?

KM: Big influence. Because, you know, I practiced law. I learned law as a member of his firm. I became partners with him later on, and I think he's a tremendous person. I think he has put his mark in Hawai'i as a politician, as a businessman, you know. I think he's. . . . And yet, you look over the national politics, and I don't think you can say that it's strange that you have individual-type politicians, you know, politicking based on personality, rather than on pure partisan politics. And he has had to play a real difficult role, I think, all of his political life. And he's been able to do it. And I think very few people can do anything like that. And then because he was able to do it, he's lasted so long. You know.

One of the reasons I know is, it's tied to economics. I don't know if you remember 1949 when ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] was life-or-death situation. And no financial institution in town would lend ILWU any hand. They needed money in the worst way. They had to feed the workers. They had to pay for a lot of things which funds were running out already. Finance Factors was the only one that put up the cash. And that's one of the primary reasons he's had support from ILWU all these years, you know. He believed in the workers. You got to have people like that. People support you, you know. So, Hiram is a great man.

WN: I guess it's a good time to stop.

END OF INTERVIEW

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